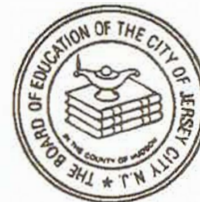




## THE JERSEY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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THE JAMES F. MURRAY SCHOOL

Dr. Sandra Jones Legay

339 STEGMAN PARKWAY

JERSEY CITY, N.J. 07305

Dear Dr. Caskey,

It is my pleasure to recommend my Dissertation Chair, **Dr. Christine Harrington for the TAA Author Mentoring Award**. My name is Dr. Sandra Jones Legay. I am a K—8 Elementary Principal. I first met Dr. Christine Harrington on April 3, 2020 on zoom. Dr. Harrington was the Associate Professor of the New Jersey City University Community College Leadership Doctorate Program (CCLP). She interviewed applicants who were interested in enrolling in the CCLP program. I was accepted into the program and became a part of the second cohort with approximately twenty others who were chosen for the program. It did not take me long to observe Dr. Christine Harrington's leadership skills in action from a closer lens.

In addition to the title of the CCLP Associate Professor, Dr. Harrington also served as a mentor, coach, dissertation chair, coordinator of the experiential mentorship program, and organizer for the CCLP graduation programming. Dr. Harrington was visible and hands-on from the start of orientation and beyond completion of graduation. She has a vast knowledge base.

Dr. Harrington held various roles in the CCLP. In each of her positions she proved to be responsible for students' learning and success. She was a powerhouse. I noticed that she set high expectations for herself and for students. She led by example. She wrote journal articles, books, and promoted scholarly practices. Dr.

Christine makes herself available to support students when they have a writer's block or when students are researching and they find themselves spiraling down in a rabbit hole. You could count on her to extend encouraging words that inspire you to keep moving forward. She keeps on the mentor's hat as she actively listens and provides specific suggestions and strategies to help students get back on track and regain their confidence to complete their work.

I know first-hand that she will not give up on her students. After thirty years, I found myself matriculating in the CCLP taking courses only to realize my academic writing ability was at a loss. In addition, I was learning about a new sector in education, namely Higher Ed. Leadership and it was undoubtedly a learning curve that took time to build a knowledge base at a doctoral level. It was not easy. It was obviously a learning curve for me. Yet, Dr. Harrington never gave up on me. She would say, "Sandra you can do this." choosing words genuine and encouraging so much so that quitting the program at what seemed to be the most challenging goal in my life, was not an option for me. I just could not give up even when I thought all hope was gone in terms of earning a doctorate. led me to believe I could improve academic writing and complete a dissertation.

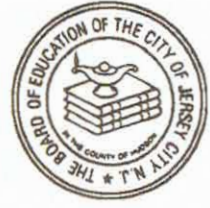
Dr. Harrington knew I was the only K-8 person in my cohort. She extended support to me by introducing me to a person in Cohort One who did not have Community college background experience. That buddy system became an extended support that was encouraged by Dr. Harrington. Dr. Harrington could have given up on me and left me to sink or swim, but she didn't instead she was determined to help me find my comfort zone within the program.





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I found Dr. Harrington to be even more supportive and encouraging when she became my dissertation coach and mentor. She provided constructive feedback and cheered me on through the entire process. A friendship evolved built on trust, open communication, and work ethics. At some point during the mentoring I felt comfortable enough to inform Christine I needed a writing coach. I reminded her that it had been 30 years since I completed my master's degree and I needed an academic writing coach. She listened to me and did something about it. She made it happen!

She not only heard me there were others who apparently needed the coaching support too. The next semester, we had a writing coach. Eventually, the contract ended. However, several months later, Dr. Harrington came across a few references for writing coaches. One of the coaches was available to work with me and other students. It was the support.

Christine's commitment to support the cohort was evident on day one. With integrity she did whatever it took for cohort members to be successful. She understood academic writing was not everyone's forte. She understood with the right tools and resources we would excel, and most of the cohort did because Dr. Christine Harrington cared about her students. She never gave up on us, instead she kept encouraging us by saying things such as, "You can do this." "You are doing better than you think." "Keep going."

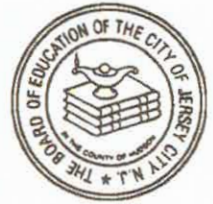
The dissertation group members would share stories of how supportive and uplifting Dr. Harrington was to us when she wasn't in our Zoom room. Dr. Harrington takes responsibility in developing students into researchers and publishers. She works tirelessly encouraging and supporting students to not only reach their goal to earn a terminal degree, but also to contribute to the field publishing beyond obtaining the dissertation.

Christine keeps virtual office hours for students. In spite of office hours, she makes herself accessible almost 24 hrs. a day. When I found myself stuck I contacted Christine to seek directions. She has always been reachable to questions and provide meaningful feedback to keep me moving forward. She never gives up on me. I can recall telling Christine that I would one day like to present my dissertation work in a leadership forum, conference, or class. Her response was, "When are you going to do it!" Approximately one month before graduation, Christine did a call out to the cohort and informed us if anyone wanted to publish a journal article, show up on Zoom on the given date and time. Several students showed up for the meeting. She even created a video so that anyone who wasn't available for the synchronous meeting could watch when they were ready to watch it. Christine presented a comprehensive presentation, explained the process, answered questions and shared misconceptions to publishing. And last but not least, Dr. Harrington told us we could do it. We were all capable of publishing. I don't know how many times I said to Dr. Harrington, "I want to publish a journal article, but have not started writing. I would text her and say, "I still want to publish." I was tired of hearing myself saying, "I still want to publish. Christine would always respond positively, "We'll co-author". "Sandra, you are going to publish. Two years later, we are anticipating our leadership journal article will



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be in print soon. I have witnessed Dr. Harrington mentoring other students in my cohort. Her passion for supporting and encouraging students to learn and grow is a gift.

Dr. Christine Harrington is an exceptional educator. I once told Christine that she is the *GOAT* in her special area of study. She is an outstanding mentor who has invested in the development of many academic writers. Dr. Christine stands as a noble educational professional. I recommend Dr. Christine Harrington receives the TAA Author Mentoring Award. The TAA Author Mentoring Award speaks the name

Dr. Christine Harrington recipient of ....

Yours in Educational Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr. Sandra Jones Legay".

Sandra Jones Legay Ed.D.